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*The
Barnstormer's
Companion....*



By
M. F. CAREY



THE BARNSTORMER'S COMPANION

Being a Little Book of Ballads Designed
for Recitation

BY M. F. CAREY

THE KNICKERBOCKER MUSIC CO.
ALBANY, N. Y.

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CONTENTS

	PAGE
Sweeney, the Tragedian,	5
Hurley, the Hypnotizer,	10
The Reubens,	15
Haley, the XLV-Player,	18
"Those Old Irish Airs,"	22
Maguire, the Speculator,	26
"The Dewey Boy,"	35
Everybody, but Casey,	43
The Great Security,	46
Willful Willie,	49
Murphy and the Minuet,	55
The Pageville Band,	58
Typo McSetters,	60
To a Tin Can,	61
Valedictory	62

SWEENEY, THE TRAGEDIAN

I shall tell of what happened to Sweeney,
Of a scene that was witnessed by me;
I shall tell you the story of Sweeney,
A disciple of Booth and Salvini,
A tragedian striving to be.
With regret, I shall tell
Of the wreck that befell
His bark on the Thespian Sea.

For it ever was Sweeney's ambition
To shine on the tragedy stage:
He was firmly convinced of his mission
To act, and to please, in addition;
And he sighed o'er the drama's position,
And the barbarous mood of the age,
Which excluded the grave to perdition,
While the gay might its leisure engage.
For the popular taste
Will to comedy haste,
Though the prophets of tragedy rage.

'Twas for Sweeney to lead, not to follow,
To stand like a man, not to stoop;
I encouraged him (friendship is hollow!)
To insist that the public must swallow
His brew of Shakesperian soup.
I acknowledge with shame
I was somewhat to blame
For his troubles—which came in a group.

Shall I ever forget the occasion!
'Twas a local variety show;
To impart to it marked variation,
Its promoters, by honeyed persuasion,
Got Sweeney—well—not to say no.
'Twas for charity's sake,
And a part he must take,
Though his dignity suffer a blow.
And so Sweeney was billed
With the music-hall guild—
With the cheap, the uncultured, the low.

He had chosen a scene from Othello,
For his favorite part was the Moor.
Iago was played by a fellow

Whose acting, in color, was yellow,—
One conceiving “to speak” as “to bellow”—

There are others, of course,—to be sure.

Yes, Iago was bad;

And the star? Well, 'twas sad

His support should be so insecure.

The tragedians made their appearance

In a welcoming burst of applause;

For both had their friends and adherents

Who were ready to give them a clearance,

While others considered the cause.

But the gallery god

Did not deign to applaud,

Which I noticed—'twas one of the straws.

And I saw when the dialogue started,

That the cherubs who sat up aloft

Gave a hearing, at best, but half-hearted;

Then, grew restless and bored; then, imparted

Their desire for a change. How they scoffed!

It was, “Sweeney, you're bum!”

And “Choke off!” and “Come, come!”

While the milder ones shuffled and coughed.

Though the pit glared aloft indignation,
The unfeeling ones could not be checked:
With Othello's farewell, the oration
Indicating the scene's termination,
I thought Sweeney would never connect;
But he did (on my word!)
And then something occurred
Which I certainly did not expect.

For (as I may be sworn) when Othello
To promiscuous things said good-bye,
A tomato (not one hard and yellow,
But a red one, large, fruity and mellow)
Was thrown by some villianous fellow,
And it broke over Sweeney's right eye!
I would fain draw a screen
O'er the rest of the scene,—
I am tempted to sit down and cry
When I think of the same,
With the pit yelling shame,
And the jeers of the vultures on high.

'Twas in vain then that Sweeney contended
He could lick any man in the place,

For the merciful curtain descended
Between him and us, and thus ended
 This chapter of human disgrace.
I shall never forget—
I can see Sweeney yet,
 The tomato, like blood, on his face!
And I feel, when I think
To what depths men will sink,
 That the brutes are a worthier race.



HURLEY, THE HYPNOTIZER

When Charley Hurley whipped McGraw, the
champion of Troy.

There swept across "the Bay" an overwhelming
wave of joy.

Those who had doubted his success were then
heard to declare

That Charley had improved and was a fighter now
"for fair; "

While those who always backed him were so lav-
ish in their praise

As to say that he could beat the world, and would
"one of these days."

No wonder Charley's cranium began to broaden
out;

No wonder, when his backers then arranged a pri-
vate bout

With a nigger from Schenectady, his confidence
was such

That when I met him on the street, and he my
hand did clutch,

And we went in to lubricate in Hennessey's saloon,
He whispered, "Cul, come down an' see me polish
off de coon!"

I was present at the bouts where he had taken his
degrees;

I felt that he could whip his dark antagonist with
ease;

But I didn't like the notion of his fighting with a
black—

I said it was undignified, but Hurley answered
back:

"Dere's a hundred plunkers in it, an' it's just like
findin'!—See?

De boys has got der dough up, an' of course dey
look to me!

I never knew before, for sure, dat money was so
cheap!—

It's a pipe!—Come down an' watch me while I put
de coon to sleep!"

I saw that Hurley's thoughts on certain victory
were fixed;

His confidence grew greater with each basin of
the mixed,
For a heavyweight in training, as he was thought
to be,
I couldn't see much harm in his imbibing two or
three;
But when I saw him empty six, at once I cried a
halt,
Declaring, if his friends were thrown, that he would
be at fault.
He stopped—"Excuse me, boys," said he; "I
might wade in too deep!
S'long!—Come down and see me when I rock de
coon to sleep!"

And we all did go to see him—we were present on
the night
When Hurley fought in Brady's barn that memor-
able fight;
And, though we had our dollars up at odds of one
to three—
Didn't Hurley tell us all, "it was like findin'
money—see?"

Ah! Clearly do I recollect when both stepped in
the ring,
How Hurley, in an undertone, a lullaby did sing!
How he winked at us and smiled a smile of satisfaction deep,
And whispered, "In de second round, I'll push
'his corks' to sleep!"

But alas!—how can I tell it?—when the second
round was o'er,
The nigger's soles were still quite horizontal with
the floor;
And when the third, and fourth, and fifth, and
sixth were fought away,
His soles still touched—quite far from perpendicular were they!
And when the awful seventh came, and he got in
that blow
That blew our money high, sky high, and laid our
Hurley low—
Good heavens! when I think of it, it almost makes
me weep!
The nigger standing up—awake! and Hurley—
down—*asleep!* ! !

And shall I e'er forget the scene when Hurley's
wits came back?

When his seconds told him he was whipped?—I
thought his heart would crack!

He blubbered like an infant—tears came rolling
down his cheek.

'Twas quite a while 'ere he could summon up the
voice to speak—

“ Say, fellers, am I licked?” said he; “did the
coon put *me* to sleep?”

Indeed, he did that, Hurley, and 'tis well for you
to weep.

For “the Bay” is now in mourning, with its chat-
tels all in pawn;

While the hypnotizing influence of Hurley's dukes
is gone!



THE REUBENS

Set the laugh in circulation,
For the Reubens are in town.
On the pan of conversation,
Let us roast them good and brown.
To the wrinkles in their clothes
Where the seeds of hay repose,
Let us first direct attention: this convicts them for
it shows
An addiction to suburban,—agricultural pursuits.
And, of course, they wear their trousers tucked
within their muddy boots.
And, their hats—for generations,
They were surely handed down!
Let us make our observations,
For the Reubens are in town.

If their clothes do not betray them,
Or their faces rough and brown;
There are other ways to weigh them,
When the Reubens come to town:

Just you listen to them talk,
And observe them gape and gawk
As they stare the lofty buildings; then just notice
 how they walk :—
You can always tell the Reubens by the way they
 sling their feet;
Over these important members their control is not
 complete.
Watch the way they lift their gaiters,
 And the way they slam them down,
As if stepping o'er "pertaters"—
 When the Reubens come to town.

What a harvest we may gather,
 When the Reuben comes to town!
Is he easy? Well, now—rather!
 Just a push will throw him down.
Yes, the Reuben's wits are thick,
While we city chaps are slick:
With a satchel full of sawdust, or a golden-var-
 nished brick,
We can start negotiations and induce him to
 invest.

It is thus we do the Reuben, and—the Reuben
does the rest.

Though on these and like offenses,
The stern moralist may frown,
Yet, we've got to pay expenses
When the Reubens come to town.

'Tis the city chap's conception
Of the Rube that I set down;
There are Rubes of this description,
And they sometimes come to town.
But—it's funny—when you read
Of the fellows who succeed,
You will find they all were brought up on a farm
—they were, indeed!—
That is, the great majority. Just look it up your-
self;
Compare the town, and country born in influence
or pelf.
That the Reubens are ambitious
Is a fact that will not down;
And we ought to be suspicious
When the Reubens come to town.

HALEY, THE XLV-PLAYER

Owen Haley was a man who loved to play a social
game;
He could beat old Hoyle himself at "forty-fives,"
and while the same
Might imply that he was tricky or inclined to
stack the cards,
A squarer fellow never lifted lumber in the yards.
Haley stood a trifle over six, and weighed two
hundred pounds,
And no one picked a fight with him on insufficient
grounds.
He would sooner play his favorite game of "forty-
fives" than eat—
Such a hearty player!—Riley said he always played
to beat.
But Riley's saying had another bearing, be it
said,
For Haley beat the table more than those with
whom he played.

And it really was a fact, for every point that Haley
scored,

He would bring his knuckles down with such a
noise upon the board

That the neighbors would be startled, until some
one passed the word:—

“Sure it’s only Haley playin’ forty-fives.”

It was Haley’s habit every night to lighten up the
gloom

With a friendly game or two in Jerry Donohue’s
back room.

’Twas the custom of the boarders, and, I think, it
still survives,

To fight away their troubles in the game of “forty-
fives.”

And when Haley was among them, all the bottles
in the place

Would dance upon the shelves, if he should hold
the jack or ace.

It was wonderful, the strength he had—it hap-
pened, many a night,

That Murphy, the patrolman, would look in, suspecting fight,
While Donohue would stop him with the explanation trite—
“Sure it’s only Haley playin’ forty-fives.”

One day—’twas in the summer—business happened to be slack,
Haley called his good friend Foley, and produced a greasy pack;
And, finding a convenient spot upon a lumber pile,
The two sat down to play a game to pass away the while.
Such a time they had!—the cracking of their knuckles on the pine
Was echoed back and forth for several yards along the line,—
Until matters reached a crisis, it was Haley caused it all,
For he gave a blow that shook the pile—that made it shift and fall.

They felt it going, tried to save themselves—but
'twas too late—

It caught them, and they narrowly escaped a fearful fate.

As it was, their plight was bad enough, for when
the two were found,

They were lying stiff and senseless as the boards
upon the ground.

Strange to say, their fellow workmen heard the
crash but never moved;

Though one expressed concern, the rest with this
remark reproved:—

'Sure it's only Haley playin' forty-fives.'



“THOSE OLD IRISH AIRS”

Come, Katie, alanna, tune up your piano
And play off the songs that your father likes best.
You've been practising there till you have me
uneasy;
Let's hear from Tom Moore—just by way of a rest.
No doubt but your teacher has told you they're
trashy
And nothing but simple, old-fashioned affairs.
That's all very well—but your father knows better;
So just play a few of those old Irish airs.

Ah! Moore was the one that could measure his
verses—
A skilful mechanic—'twas he knew his art;
A thief of the world, with a wonderful latch-key,
To open the door of an Irishman's heart.
He never would knock and apply for admittance,
But in he would creep and make off with your
cares;

And well may his countrymen hold him in honor
For putting such words to those old Irish airs.

If it's hungry you are for a song sentimental,
Just take up the list and look over the food;
“The Last Rose of Summer,” “The Vale of
Avoca,”
“Believe Me” and others will answer your mood.
If revengeful you feel at the wrongs of the Saxon,
“Let Erin Remember” will soothe unawares,
While the song of “The Minstrel” will speak your
resentment
And ring for all ages those old Irish airs.

If to mirth you're inclined, or in need of diversion,
Look over the feast and prepare for a laugh:—
“Miss McLeod” has the floor and our dear “Nora
Creina”
With “Tatter Jack Welsh” and gay “Larry
O'Gaff.”
Don't tell me there's naught to admire in such
music—

'Twas made for all times—you can see how it
wears.

Why, the blood rushes up to my cheek with the
notes,

And my heart beats the time to those old Irish
airs.

In the war with the South, with my Irish com-
panions,

I've heard those airs played when the battle was
nigh;

And I've marked the wild look in their eyes as
they listened,

As if they were ready to fight then, and die.

And when I lay wounded, and death hovered o'er
me,

The music would haunt me and mix in my prayers,
And I wondered at times if the angels in heaven
Had songs that could equal those old Irish airs.

Don't tell me that music is simple or trashy,
Which fills men with motives unselfish and high.

There is not a bar in your fine compositions
To make a man fight for a cause—though he die.
And though that same cause may seem lost for the
 present,
The loss only adds to the charm that it wears;
For the hope smold'ring deep in an Irishman's
 bosom
Will never die out while he hears those old airs.

Then, Katie, alanna, play off the dear music,
And please your old father,—if but for to-night,—
For though it may not be at all to your liking,
It's all in the taste—and we both may be right.
Play off the dear measures that breathe of the
 shamrock,
The moors and the mountains, the factions and
 fairs;—
Though a tyrant has strangled a cause and a
 people,
He never could smother those old Irish airs.



MAGUIRE, THE SPECULATOR

I remember well the day I got acquainted with
Maguire:—

'Twas at Kennedy's the broker—stocks were
dropping, and the wire

Sang a song of swift disaster in the Stock Ex-
change below—

A song which ran the gamut to the lowest notes of
woe.

As I stood and watched, with others there, the
changes on the board,

Comparing stocks and figuring the losses they had
scored,

I made a chance remark about “Confabulated
Gas,”

(Some expression of my faith in it was what my
lips let pass),

Which remark was caught up eagerly by someone
standing near,

A gentleman whose face was drawn and white
with nervous fear,

Who, foolishly, requested me to tell him all I
knew
About the stock in question. From his anxious-
ness I drew
The obvious conclusion (which was true enough,
alas!)
That my friend must be a holder of "Confabu-
lated Gas;"
So I reassured him, going far beyond the facts I
knew,—
I declared the stock would rally back within a
week or two.
And it did. Although at best I was an optimistic
liar,
My prediction won for me the admiration of
Maguire.

After that I saw him often, and wherever we
might meet,
Before the board at Kennedy's, or out upon the
street,
He would greet me somewhat stealthily, and never
let me pass

Without asking my opinion of "Confabulated Gas;"—

Of its merits, and its prospects: Did I look for any rise?—

Or, did I think it high enough?—or, what would I advise?

It was plain to me that he was but a novice at the game,

But novices are lucky—they arrive there just the same.

I was curious to know why he elected to invest In a property so whimsical: Maguire to me confessed

That a friend of his, a man of wealth, "a man who ought to know,"

Had told him to secure some "Gas," and not to let it go.—

That, while it might sell lower, it would pay him in the end.

Maguire had every reason to believe his learned friend,

So he got together all the little wealth at his command

And bought a hundred shares of "Gas." He certainly had sand.

The price he paid was eighty, but it slumped away so quick

Down to sixty and a trifle that it really made him sick.

He began to have his doubts about the judgment of his friend,

So, whenever prices showed a disposition to descend,

Maguire would fear a panic,—he could scent it in the air.

When the bears were in the saddle (how Maguire did hate a bear!)

Scenes of riot, wreck and ruin would before his vision pass,

With a general explosion of "Confabulated Gas."

For Maguire could never understand the attitude of bears;

He couldn't grasp their function in the balance of affairs.

To him they were as highwaymen;—he thought it
very strange

That the governors permitted them to enter the
Exchange.

His views, you see, were personal, not broad nor
over-deep,

For his mind had not that general or philosophic
sweep.

When Kennedy would tell him bears were useful
in their way,—

That, like the tail upon a kite, they had a part to
play,—

That, were it not for them, the stocks would sail
up out of sight,

Maguire would simply grunt and utter forth the
hope they might.

He didn't think it fair that "Gas" should get so
many knocks;

He thought that for a change the bears should raid
the other stocks.

Now this complaint betrayed in him another
mental twist,

For he never made comparisons with others on
the list.

He never kept account of them,—they were as lesser lights:

The “Gas” (what else?) was Jupiter, the rest were satellites.

Any weakness in the “Grangers” or the “Coalers” was as naught;

To the Sugar and Tobacco stocks he never gave a thought.

He could’nt view the market as a whole, or in the mass;

When in search of information it was always,
“How is Gas?”

It used to weary me at times, it got to be a bore;
I remember once when with a friend and passing
by his store,

He saw me and ran out, his little query to present:—

“How is it?” “How is what?” said I, well knowing what he meant.

I admit that I was nettled, but he made me smile,
alas!

As with solemn face he sprung that same old question, “How is Gas?”

When a man becomes possessor of a hundred
shares of stock,
It is saddening to witness how his finer feelings
rock,—
How the springs of human sympathy are dried
within his breast,—
How every noble impulse is combated and re-
pressed.
I regret to say Maguire was no exception to the
rule,—
That his reason was enslaved, and of his selfish-
ness the tool,
Or he never would have argued (as he often did
alas!)
That nothing could be justified that interfered,
with "Gas."
Thus, when the Venezuela message staggered
Johnny Bull,
And reacted on the market, giving it a downward
pull;
Maguire, although an Irishman with all the term
implies,
Declared we had no right to interfere. He shut
his eyes

To everything but prices. When the Cubans
sought our aid

Maguire, although his sympathies were with them,
was afraid

That a serious disturbance in the market might
ensue

If we give them recognition:—so, of course, it
wouldn't do.

And when the silver champions obtained the
upper hand

In the Democratic party,—when, with Bryan in
command,

It seemed as if the Democrats had half a show to
win,

And the market sank to depths where it before
had never been;

Then was it civil war was waged within Maguire's
breast,

And his boasted straight Democracy subjected to
a test,

He declared to me that Bryan was the greatest man
alive,

But how could he vote for Bryan, with "Gas" at
forty-five?

How he voted, I was curious to know, but never
learned.

When the crisis had been weathered and the market upward turned,
And Maguire was happy in his "Gas"—and didn't care to sell,
I would rally him about his vote, but he would never tell.
He was guarded in the matter, not the slightest clue he gave,
And the secret of his choice lies buried with him in the grave.

For Maguire is dead.—His soul, I hope, is now among the blest,
Where the tickers cease from ticking, and the market is at rest;—
Where all are long of Happiness, and short of Pain and Care.
I also hope the time shall come when I may join him there;
But I'm willing now to wager, if Saint Peter lets me pass,
That Maguire will hail me at the gate and whisper,
"How is Gas?"

"THE DEWEY BOY"

McKinley, of Ohio, was our spokesman at the
time

When the Spaniards sank the Maine, and seemed
to glory in their crime.

We wanted peace till that occurred,—'twas blood
we wanted then;

So McKinley passed the word along to all our
fighting men:

"Get ready, boys, to let the old war eagle loose
again,

For the foreigner our fighting bird is scorning."

Across the seas the message went to Dewey far
away:

"Get ready Dewey! Sail your ships into Manila
Bay!

Every vessel of the Spaniard you must capture or
destroy;

Let not a ship be left our western seaboard to
annoy;

Be you the first to strike, and may the issue bring
us joy,
And speed our night of sorrow into morning."

When the message got to Dewey, in the far-off
China bay,—
April, brushing aside her tears, was smiling into
May.

'Twas the time of year, as Dewey knew, when
folks back in the States

Were wont to change their residence, and so he
hailed his mates,

Saying, "Boys, it's near the first of May—the
great occasion waits,

And besides the owner here has given warning.
The Navy people seem to think it's time for us
to move,

(It is hoped the change will please us, and our
general health improve.)

They have ordered us to occupy a place across the
way,

Which has now a Spanish tenant—but he may not
care to stay!

We shall call on him, however, and hear what he
has to say;

Let your anchors be uplifted in the morning.”

So they lifted up their anchors on the morrow,
and they steamed

Across the China Sea to where the Spaniard lay
and dreamed.

For three full days they journeyed on, and then
the goal was nigh;

But the hour was not auspicious, so they quietly
lay by,

While the stars like mice, came creeping forth to
feast upon the sky,

Till the solar cat should rout them at the dawn-
ing.

Manila Bay before them lay,—they stood without
the gate,—

Said Dewey, when he thought it time, “Well, boys,
its growing late, .

And there’s nothing to be gained by waiting out
here any more;

Let us all go in and register, and—I'll go on
before,—
And don't disturb the slumbers of the man that's
tending door,—
We can show him our credentials in the morn-
ing."

In single file, with Dewey at the head they started
in,
With every ship prepared for fight, and eager to
begin.
Stealthily, they sailed across the threshold of the
Bay,
Tardily the guns on shore awoke and bade them
stay,
But they had to reach Manila at the breaking of
the May,
So they hurried on, the feeble challenge scorning.
On through the darkness, up the Bay, went Dewey
and his men,
Carefully feeling their way along. A few more
miles, and then
The goal was reached. As silently as snow comes
in the night,

Surprising us at morn when we behold the land-
scape white,
So Dewey came upon the foe;—and woeful was
the sight,
When the Spaniard woke to view it in the
morning.

For the Spaniard wasn't ready:—in astonishment
and rage
He glared upon the Yankee—yet he hastened to
engage;
From fort and ship he volleyed forth an angry
fusilade
As the Yankee ships came steaming up as if upon
parade;
No answer did the latter make, they prudently
delayed

For a closer range, as Dewey gave the warning.
With silent but impatient guns, they moved upon
the foe,
Until Dewey thought the distance right, and said,
"Boys, let 'er go;
Go at them now and eat them up,—the Eagle
waits in pain,—

Remember, every shot must tell, and don't forget
the Maine!

They'll be printing new geographies when we get
through with Spain—

We will send the world to school again this
morning."

In chorus, then, the Yankee guns, with methods
trained and true,

Began to sing; and then it was, the Spanish
splinters flew.

Above the fleet the Eagle soared, an inspiration
dear,

Breasting his native element, the gun-smoked
atmosphere;

While Dewey, death-directing, sped the shells on
their career—

Riddling, sinking, shattering, and burning.

And the old war eagle flapped his wings and
screamed out in delight

"I've seen 'em all, but damme! how that Dewey
boy can fight!"

And fight he did, with energy, with coolness and
with skill,

Till not a Spanish ship was left afloat to thwart
his will,—
Till our flag was floated proudly o'er Manila where
it still,
In its glory, is the first to greet the morning.

When the present Yankee school-boy in his coun-
try's hist'ry reads,
He shall dwell, with just elation, on our many
naval deeds.
He shall read of Jones, who made us felt when
struggling to be free,
Of Decatur, Hull and Perry, that iconoclastic
three,
Who loved to fight and whip the self-styled ruler
of the sea,
Her claims to naval sovereignty scorning.
He shall read of fearless Farragut, who, breasting
shot and shell,
Dashed up the Mississippi, and, triumphant, lived
to tell;
And, last of all (in point of time, but not in merit,
—Nay!)

He shall read of him who woke them up in far
Manila Bay,—

He shall read of Dewey rising on the sea at break
of day,

And sweeping all before him with the morning.



EVERYBODY, BUT CASEY

There was trouble at the boarding-house, a week ago to-night,—

An argument political, which ended in a fight.

Mr. Foley is a silver man, unlimited and free;

He talked to Mr. Casey of "the Crime of Seventy-three."

Though his knowledge of the subject was decidedly diffuse,

And though Casey took exception to a number of his views,

There never would have been the slightest trouble in the case

Had not Foley, making gestures, thrust his hand in Casey's face.

Mr. Casey thought this more than he was called upon to stand;

He dropped the argument at once, but quickly raised his hand,

And aiming straight for Foley's nose, let go with
all his might,
And with that the two went at it in a rough-and-
tumble fight.

When the boarders got between them, and a truce
had been arranged,
The general plan of Foley's face was noticeably
changed.
He shook his fist at Casey, threatened vengeance
deep and dire,
And called on all the powers that be to further his
desire.

Thus they parted in their anger, but they met
again that night
At the Dutchman's on the corner, and, to show
the world his spite,
Foley threw a silver dollar on the bar with savage
vim,
And invited everybody there to have a drink with
him—
Everybody, but Casey.

This proceeding had a tendency to start the
strife anew;
And the boarders who were present thought another
fight was due.
There were fifteen men who answered in response
to Foley's call
To drink; including Foley there were sixteen
men in all.
Said Casey as he counted heads: "It pleases me
to know
That Foley, when he treats, observes the proper
ratio,
And will buy the drinks for sixteen men to every-
one that's barred.
It's funny. But I hate to see him take the thing
so hard;
Sure I'm sixteen times as sorry as himself we ever
fought."
"Enough!" said Foley; "Let us make it seventeen
to nought."
So, with general approval, they their difference
did sink,
And everybody stood in line before the bar to
drink,
Including Casey.

THE GREAT SECURITY

Are you for stories? Here's one that I got
From an old man; which opens up its plot
In Ireland, in a fateful famine year.

The story-teller's father, 'twould appear
A prudent farmer, had put by a store
From the abundance of the year before,
Which he retailed among the peasantry
Who, lacking cash, could give security.

One day there came to him a stranger sad,
A widow, with her son, both poorly clad;
A sack of meal of him she did request,
If he would trust? The farmer acquiesced,
Thinking the payment she could guarantee;
And asked who her security would be—

“Security!” the woman echoed, awed;

“Sure, I have no security but God.”

The farmer started — stammered — bowed his
head:

“I couldn’t ask a better one!” he said.
“The meal is yours, good woman! Have it so;
And though the price of it to me you owe,
I’ll take your word for it—I’m not afraid
But God in His good time will see me paid.”

The woman thanked him, took the meal away;
The farmer never saw her from that day.
His wife, to whom he spoke of the affair,
Who of the pennies took a closer care,
Reproached him for his carelessness, for she
Had not his faith or fine simplicity.

A year rolled by, and then another one;
No word came from the widow or her son.
The wife now made no effort to conceal
Her doubts concerning payment for the meal.
Many the hint she dropped of reckless waste,
Of charity and confidence misplaced,
To which her worthy man, with smile sedate,
Would simply toss his head and bid her wait.

At last—it must have been three years or more—
There came one day a stranger to their door;

The farmer knew, as he his face did scan,
It was the widow's son now grown a man.
The youth recalled the meal that had been given,
And said his mother, who was now in Heaven,
Had made him promise by her dying cot,
At the first opportunity he got,
To pay their debt;—and he had said he would;
He now had come to make that promise good.

The farmer smiled, and raised his hands in praise,
Looked at his wife who blushed beneath his gaze :
“Ah, woman!” said he, “Now you must admit
That I was right, for here's the proof of it.
I always said that debt could not be bad,
For see the great security I had!”



WILLFUL WILLIE

At a table, in a cottage, sat a family of three—
Father, mother, and a son—and they were doomed
to disagree.

'Twas Thanksgiving, and the youth declared that
he was nearly starved,

As with hungry eyes he gazed upon the turkey
being carved,

But the old man took his time, and when the job
was neatly done,

He reserved the breast and wing, and passed the
leg unto his son.

'Twas at this the son grew angry, and at once
began to bawl—

If he couldn't have the breast or wing, he wouldn't
eat at all.

Now the father was a man who never took the
slightest sauce—

(Though it goes well with a turkey) he would
show that he was boss;

In a manner terrorizing he held up the carving
knife,
Saying, "Willie, never speak like that again in
all your life!"
But dear Willie didn't weaken for a little:—he
arose,
Left the table and the room, and donned his Sun-
day suit of clothes;
Then walked out into the cold world, slamming
hard the big front door;
And the father and the mother never saw their
Willie more!

Oh! the watching and the waiting for their boy to
reappear!
Days expanded into months, and soon the months
became a year.
Still no tidings of the absent — not a letter, not a
word —
Though the father searched and questioned, not
the slightest news was heard.
When Thanksgiving came, they sat before the
table in despair,

And their eyes were blurred with tears, as they
beheld the vacant chair.

Very little did they eat, and very little did they
say,

For their thoughts were with the prodigal — with
Willie far away.

Soon the mother's hair grew silvered, and the
father's step grew slow,

Worn with restlessness they faded — sinking
'neath the cruel blow.

Still they never gave up hoping that their boy
might yet appear ;

And the fire of hope kept burning for another
anxious year.

When Thanksgiving time drew nigh they adver-
tised for him to come —

Published messages imploring him to turn his
steps to home.

Every paper had a personal, the hardest heart to
wring,

Saying, "Willie, dear, come back, and you may
have the breast and wing."

And what became of Willie, when he left his
father's roof?

Ah! sad to tell, he ne'er did well—from work he
held aloof,

And eked a mean existence, living like a common
tramp—

To a free lunch fiend he dwindled, of the most
obnoxious stamp.

Drifting to the great metropolis, he shifted to
and fro

With the tide of poor unfortunates who do not
reap or sow.

There were times when he was hungry—turned
upon the streets to beg,

He wanted then no breast nor wing—his kingdom
for a leg!

Yet he never thought of turning to the anxious
ones at home—

They should never know his struggles; he had
left, and he would roam

Over all the wild creation, and he never would
return—

Be dependent on his father for the food he did not
earn.

Thus he fought the years in silence, till one day he
chanced to read,

In a paper laid as table cloth beneath a free lunch
feed,

Words that rocked his resolution, opened up
emotion's spring—

They were, "Willie, dear, come back, and you
may have the breast and wing."

In a moment he decided to put pride upon the
shelf,

For he knew those words were printed for none
other than himself.

Back he started for the homestead, like the prodi-
gal, but Fate

Was not half so kind to Willie, for he came—
alas—too late !

Ah ! the sheet he read the message in was printed
long before,

And his parents worn with waiting, had crossed
to the golden shore.

Willie sickened when he heard the news—they
buried him in spring !

Let us hope he is an angel now, and doesn't lack
a wing.



MURPHY AND THE MINUET

"Bad scan to it," said Murphy, with his collar
wringing-wet;

"May the devil dance with him who introduced
the minuet.

I can paralyze the polka, trip the waltz without a
break,

But the minuet it beats me—that it does—it wins
the cake.

Sure the muscles of me legs are cramped, and
keep contracting yet,

Just from standing stiff upon the floor to walk the
minuet.

Did you say you never danced it? Sure, it's not
a dance at all:

You move, of course,—they keep you gawking up
and down the hall.

The music plays a funeral march, you take the
lady's hand,

Then up you go and down you go, then bow, and
scrape, and stand.

The ladies lift their skirts as though afraid they
might get wet,

And the men step out like ganders when they
walk the minuet.

I'm told the dance is English, yes, it's English,
don't you know?

If you didn't, you'd surmise it, it's so deuced,
bloomin' slow.

And it's not because it's English I dislike it, if
you please,

It's the stiffness—sure you have no use for hinges
in your knees,

Yet the ladies think it beautiful, and all of them
are set

On dancing nothing else at all but the stately
minuet.

Still it's not the step that tires you when you start
to walk the chalk,

It's the consciousness, the feeling that you're
posing like a gawk.

And every time you raise the left and balance on
the right,

Your feet become obnoxious and you wish them
out of sight.

I will not be a Romeo to any Juliet

Who looks for me to lead her out to dance the
minuet."



THE PAGEVILLE BAND

When music cheering arrests my hearing,
I often think of the Pageville Band,—
Of their selections—their tone-confections,—
Their swift dissections of the theme in hand.
When Gilmore thundered with half a hundred,
I sat and wondered was it half so grand,
As my memory traveled
To the strains unraveled
By the eager efforts of the Pageville Band.

I've heard renditions of good musicians,
The coalitions of their finest notes;
With Cappa, Doring and Sousa pouring
Harmonious offerings from brazen throats;
But 'mid their pealing, there came a feeling—
A thought congealing the music grand,
As my mind reverted
To the disconcerted—
To the wild outpourings of the Pageville Band.

With what affection my recollection
Calls them before me!—I see them pass!—
That aggregation—that combination—
That fermentation of wind and brass!
Like the blithe canary, their time might vary,
Yet they spoke a message all could understand,
And a Wagner lover
Would, no doubt, discover
Sympathetic methods in the Pageville Band.

There's a band in Hoosick that murders music:—
The bass-drummer smites with a red right hand,
While the trombone smothers his weaker brothers,
And stabs his neighbor at each expand.
'Mid such destruction and breezy ruction,
Fearless, unmoved, unscathed, I stand,
For I was hardened
By the sins unpardoned
That were shrieked to Heaven by the Pageville
Band.



TYPO McSETTERS

Typo McSetters, of the Daily Lance,
Awoke one night out of a mixed-ale trance,
And turning saw at an adjacent frame,
Shadowy, but apparent just the same,
An angel working with a golden stick.
Typo was paralyzed, but rallying quick,
He cried: "What settest thou?" The angel turned.
As if the speaker bold he would have spurned,
He coldly, proudly spake: "I set," said he,
"The names of those at Mrs. Astor's tea."
"And is mine one?" "No!" said the angel, vexed,
"Set 'em up again," said Mac, "and mine is
mixed."

The angel vanished through the doorway dim;
And Mac said he went out to look for him.
Next day The Lance had a Police Digest,
And lo! McSetters' name led all the rest.



TO A TIN CAN

Thou still unrinsed food of William goats!

Thou fostered child of high protection chiefs!
Improvised growler, out of whose mouth floats
The well-mixed ale that drowns the Hobo's
griefs!

What fruits are pictured round thy torrid zone!

Where is the Jumbo peach this represents?
In Jersey or the dales of Delaware?
What purple grapes! and gracious! what a pear!
Colossal!—Surely these fruits must have grown
On trees we see in California prints!

Real fruit is large, but pictured fruit is huge!

There are no limits to a painter's brush
Debased, and partner to a subterfuge
To sell an enterprising canner's slush.
Great Pear, I shall preserve thee as a fake!
Soft Peach, thy downy cheek shall ever bloom!
Those purple grapes shall cluster 'round thy brow.
Discarded Tin—and Father Time shall make
Of thee a ferrule for his scythe—and thou
Shalt rise above the general caprid doom!

VALEDICTORY

Go, little hobo of a book,
Endeavor to exist.
Let not thy name too soon adorn
The mortuary list.

I would not have thee live away;
A season shall suffice,
If in that season thou shouldst make
Incision in the ice.

Live, then, a season, as a flower:
To that, I liken thee;
Suspecting I have not the power
To germinate a tree.

Aye, like a flower, comport thyself:—
Yet, do not blush unseen,
Though springing in the desert air
Without the Magazine;

But ope thy leaves, and strive to scent
The circumfluent air.
Haply some wight may pluck thee
For his passing boutonniere,—

May pluck, and wear thee for a day,
As beautiful pro tem.—
Better be worn and cast away
Than wither on the stem.

Go, little book, and sail the seas
Where prouder ships have sunk,—
Where storms abide, and every tide
Flows fast to the Isle of Junk.

Go, little book, pursue thyself,
Go forth, I care not where,—
To Hades, if thou wilt, and say
That Richard sent thee there.

Go, little book,—but thou art gone.

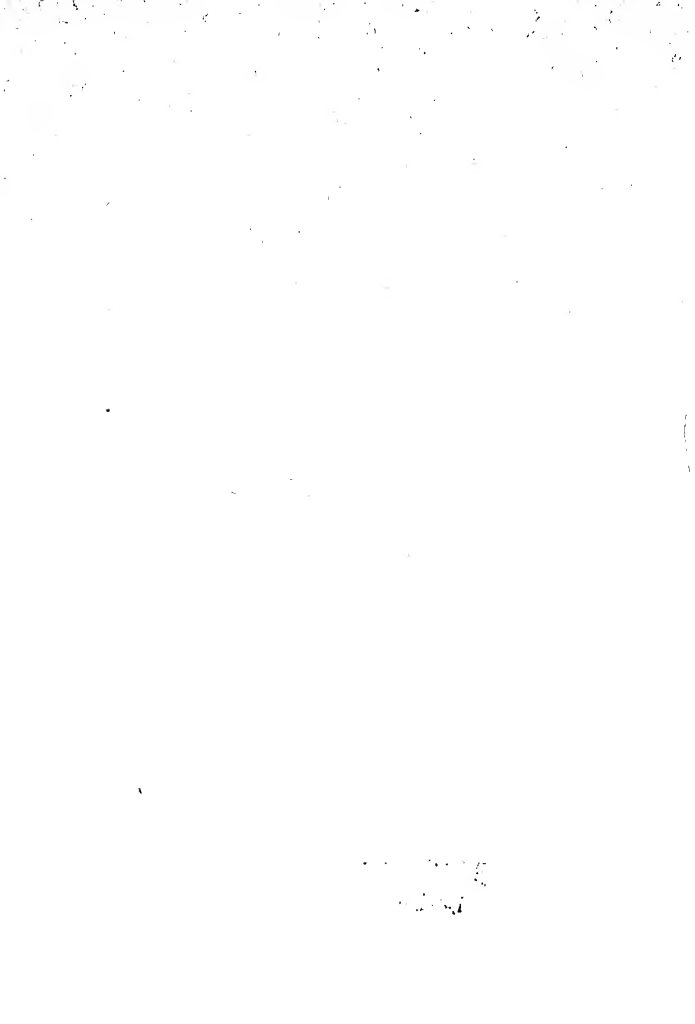
Well—if thou shouldst return,

My fire poetic still shall glow,

For I'll have books to burn.



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